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# Abraham Lincoln's Contemporaries

Frank Vizetelly

Excerpts from newspapers and other  
sources

From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

A faint, light gray watermark of the Lincoln Memorial is visible in the background. The memorial is a large, classical structure with a prominent central dome and four smaller domes on the sides. The text is centered over the watermark.

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# WITNESS TO A WAR

*Century-old woodcuts and words  
preserve a British correspondent's  
experiences in the U. S. Civil War*

By ROBERT T. COCHRAN, JR.  
National Geographic Staff

**"T**IS A MIGHTY UPRISING of a united people determined to protect their flag to the last," English war correspondent Frank Vizetelly wrote to the *Illustrated London News* from New York in May, 1861. Fresh off the Liverpool packet, the artist-writer was hurrying south from Boston to join the Federal Army and cover the American Civil War.

He was writing about the Union side that day, but later he would say much the same about the Confederacy. For Vizetelly reported the war from both sides, almost from its beginning to its bitter end, with vivid sketches and dispatches. He was under fire innumerable times as he ranged through the battlefields and cities of a Nation at war with itself.

A typical Vizetelly drawing (left) showed the bloody, no-quarter assault by Federal troops on Battery Wagner, a Confederate fort near Charleston, South Carolina, in 1863. Men fought with bayonets, rifle butts, even hand to hand after a landing from the sea.

The enterprising *News*, the world's first and oldest illustrated magazine, peppered dispatches from around the globe with on-the-spot drawings to show its readers history as it unfolded. Cast in the classic mold of war correspondent, Vizetelly had roamed France, Italy, and Sicily before coming to America.

Throughout his career he was irrepressible, a sprawling, gregarious *bon vivant*. He excelled at his exciting trade because he threw himself without reserve into the stories he covered. Like Virgil, he could have said: "These . . . things I saw, and a great part of them I was."

ALL WOOD ENGRAVINGS FROM THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS,  
COURTESY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



PHOTOGRAPH FROM BRADY-HANDY COLLECTION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

## Fiasco at Bull Run sends Federals in full retreat

THE CIVIL WAR boiled into a maelstrom of confusion and panic near Manassas, Virginia, in the first Battle of Bull Run, July 21, 1861, and Vizetelly (left, in a Mathew Brady photograph) plunged into the thick of the fighting. Each side flung hastily mobilized, untrained troops into ragged combat as Federal Gen. Irvin McDowell launched a bold thrust at Richmond (see *Atlas Map* supplement with this issue).

Confederate lines held, the Federals broke, and by late afternoon, panic spread. "Retreat is a weak term to use when speaking of this disgraceful rout," Vizetelly wrote. "Those who had been fortunate enough to get places in the baggage-wagons thrust back others with their bayonets and musket-stocks."





Wounded men were crushed under the wheels of the heavy, lumbering chariots that dashed down the road at full speed" (above).

The war might have been decided that hot Sunday. But the panic taught President Lincoln and his generals a hard lesson: This war was no lark, the Confederacy no push-over. To win, the Union had to hammer together armies from its mobs of volunteers. As it turned out, the task took four years.

**T**ROUBLE WAS, not many of the raw recruits at Bull Run knew much about fighting. Vizetelly watched the 71st New York and an Alabama regiment earlier in the day "blaze away... at three hundred yards until both were badly cut up" (left), but as one who had seen Europe's professionals fight, he knew long-distance sparring did not take ground and whip the enemy. Troops who grappled won.

"I think that if the bayonet had been used more freely the matter would have been sooner decided, and with less loss of life," he said. At day's end, disorganized Confederates watched unhappily while panicked Federals, plums ripe for the plucking with a slashing counterattack, made good their headlong retreat to Washington.



## Out of confusion, a Confederate hero

**T**HERE WERE PLENTY of bumbler in the two inept armies that clashed at Bull Run, but out of the confusion and dust there emerged an authentic hero. A stray bullet smashed Thomas J. Jackson's finger, but he gained a reputation and the war's most memorable nickname.

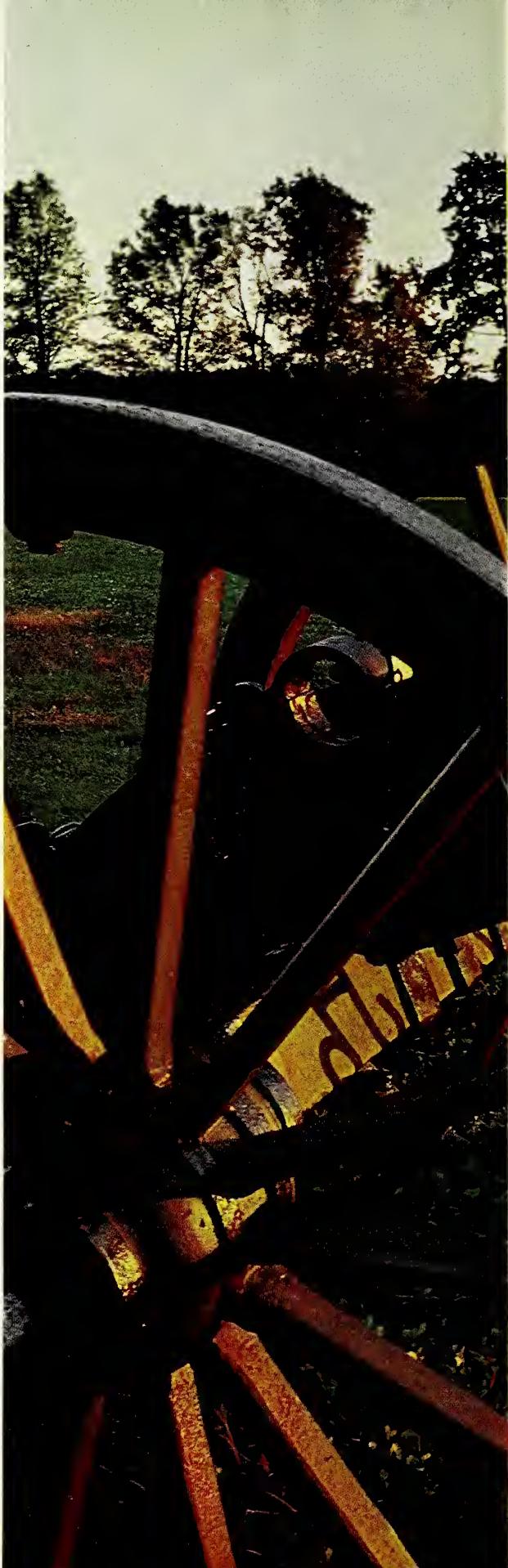
At the battle's height, several harassed Confederate regiments wavered and nearly broke. A Southern brigadier glanced frantically about. "There stands Jackson like a stone wall!" he shouted. Today a row of cannon and a statue of the great commander mark that famous line (right).

After Bull Run, both sides waited: the North until a new commander, Gen. George B. McClellan, could put another army together, and the South, with some logic, for the North to make the next move. The South had only to defend itself successfully to win in the end; the North lost if it failed to restore the Union.

**V**IZETELLY ALSO WAITED. There was no blood and thunder in sketches of camp life. "At present I am almost at a standstill for subjects for illustration," he complained. What bustle there was he could scarcely sketch. "The only persons who appear to me to display any amount of activity are the greedy hordes of hungry contractors, who are determined to have their pound of flesh from the sorely pressed Union."

Meanwhile, he scouted around Washington's perimeter, visiting advance posts and riding out with skirmishing parties. "I am getting tired of this continual 'Wait another week and you will see something done,' which I am constantly being told by officers high in command."

As the North's determined mobilization continued, he grew optimistic: "We may have an attack here from hour to hour, and I dare scarcely leave," he told his readers. "Both sides are now awfully close together, and very, very strong. I am waiting to get some definite notion of the next move on the cards, and shall then act promptly."



EKTACHROME BY NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC  
PHOTOGRAPHER THOMAS NEBBIA © N.G.S.





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**D**URING THE CIVIL WAR, a man could climb a tall poplar on Virginia's Confederate-held Blue Ridge and, with a telescope, see Washington's unfinished Capitol dome (above). In 1865 the dome was

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finished; Federal victory preserved the Government it symbolizes. Eventually, after Reconstruction had run its course, former Confederates sat in Congress, and the Capitol once again stood for a truly United States.

## Buckskin and satin grace the President's House

**V**IZETELLY met President Lincoln at the British Embassy soon after he arrived in Washington, and on New Year's Day, 1862, visited the White House. "I assisted to swell the crowd of anything but swells who went to pay their respects to the President" (below), he wrote.

In the 19th century the President was not the protected, remotely grand figure circumstances have since forced him to become. People wandered in and out of the White House as though they owned it and approached him as a first among equals.

So the reception seemed strange to Vizetelly's British sensibilities. "The visitors pass directly in front of the Chief of the State, and each appears . . . to endeavour to squeeze the nails out of the president's fingers, who, by-the-by, appears to have a pleasant word for everybody, and especially addresses himself to the ladies and children."

Englishmen tended to regard America as somewhat outlandish at best, and the reception confirmed Vizetelly's opinion. For here



FRANCIS ROITT, WASHINGTON EVENING STAR

was Judge Harney, of New Mexico, in "full hunting costume of deerskin," who shook the artist's hand gravely and allowed as how in the Southwest they hardly wore anything else, even in court.

Today, as in 1862, Westerners in buckskins enliven Washington occasions. Bearded Arizonans (above) came to pay their respects to President John F. Kennedy and rode in his inaugural parade last January.



## "Soft falls the dew on the face of the dead"

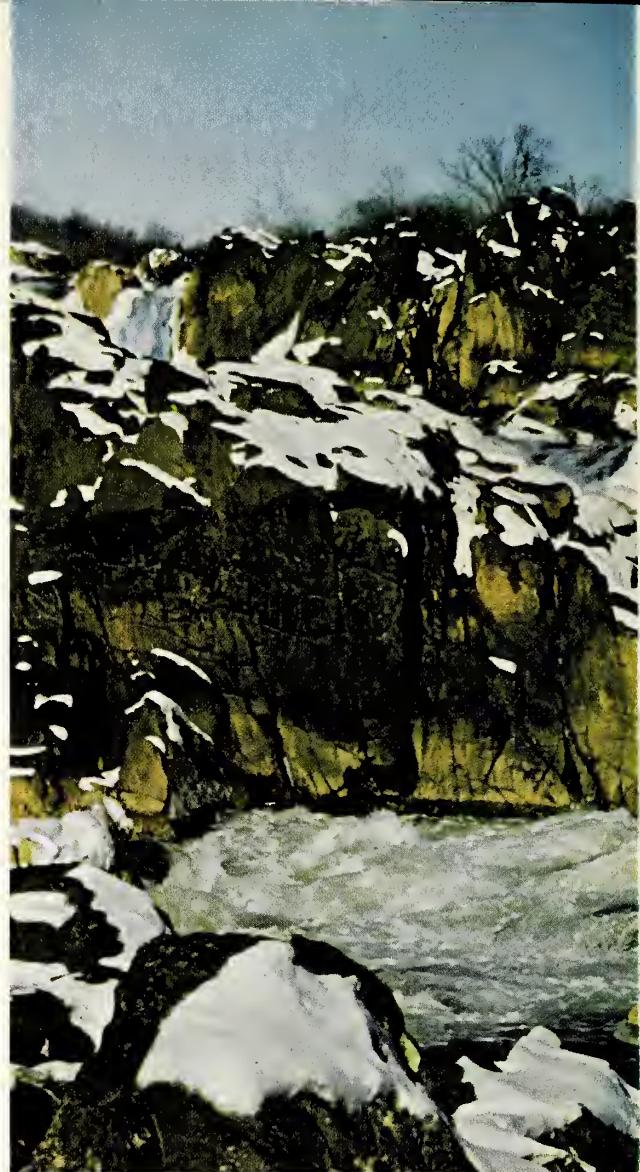
**P**ROWLING THE POTOMAC, natural boundary between the Confederacy and the Union, Vizetelly looked for battles. To his dismay he found few in late 1861 and early 1862. But the scenery had a wild magnificence—and there were always pickets.

He sketched Great Falls, 15 miles above Washington, as forbidding and turbulent then (**below**) as now (**right**), and its opposing corporal's guards fighting a typical, mean little engagement that could leave a man every bit as dead as a major campaign. A popular wartime song told the story:

*All quiet along the Potomac tonight,  
No sound save the rush of the river;  
While soft falls the dew on the face  
of the dead—  
The picket's off duty forever."*

Soldiers on both sides, who often had no stomach for sniping, agreed on their own rough rules and stuck to them. For instance, late in the war, Confederates crouching for a surprise attack near Petersburg made a noise. A Federal picket immediately called a challenge.

"We are just gathering a little corn," a





KODACHROME BY NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PHOTOGRAPHER KATHLEEN REVIS © N.G.S.

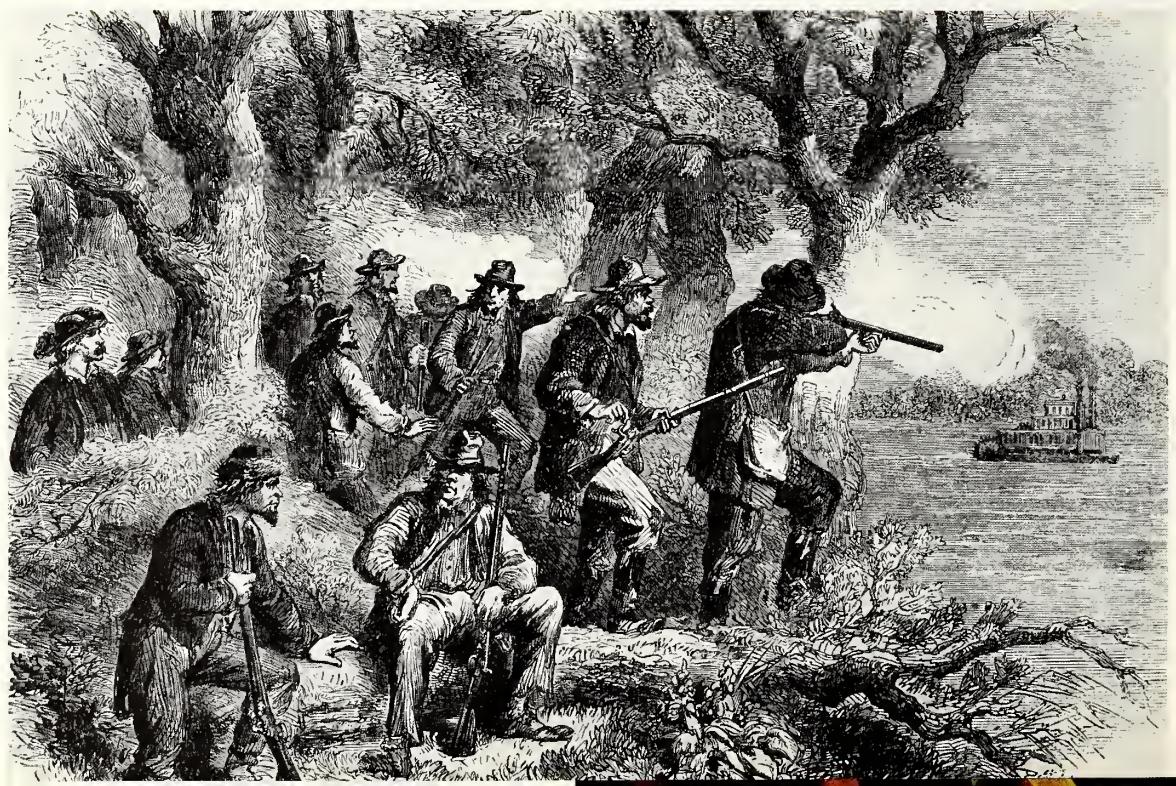
quick-thinking Reb called back. "All right, Johnny . . ." the reassured Yank replied.

Soon the Confederate commander ordered his man to fire, signaling the attack. Johnny Reb hesitated, determined to play fair. Finally he yelled: "Hello, Yank! . . . Look out, we are coming!" His conscience clear, he fired the signal and the attack began.

More than pickets clashed on the Potomac in October, 1861, when a Federal force pushed across at Ball's Bluff, near Leesburg, Virginia. Confederates pinned the Union men against the riverbank, and the boats that brought them over sank. Vizetelly finally sketched bayonets in use. "Believed to be the only instance in which a bayonet charge has been attempted by a regiment in the Federal army," the *News* observed tartly.

**T**HE WESTERN MEN are proving themselves the heroes of the war," Vizetelly wrote on April 11, 1862. "I leave this evening for the West." Behind his sudden decision lay a long and vexing haggle with Federal authorities. When General McClellan took his army to the Virginia Peninsula to begin a major offensive which he hoped would crash into Richmond's back door and end the war, Vizetelly's credentials were canceled, and he was left behind.

So he went to report the war along the Mississippi. "There . . . I shall find field enough for the exercise of my profession," he told his readers, "where battles, not petty skirmishes of advanced posts, but good, honest, sledge-hammer fights with wholesome bills of mortality, were the order of the day."





KODACHROME BY HUGO H. HARPER © NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

## "This West has a mighty destiny"

AS VIZETELLY HEADED WEST to find the war, he learned a great deal about the Nation engaged in it. America was large ("Oh! how many times since starting have I bemoaned the extent of this 'Almighty big country'"); its people casually dressed ("the favourite style appearing to be a slouched hat, rough flannel shirt of gorgeous pattern, and bedtick trousers tucked into high boots"), and voracious at mealtime ("the celerity with which they ship their supplies is incredible, and their bill of lading is assorted").

On his way to the Federal base at Cairo, Illinois, where the Mississippi (above, left)

and Ohio Rivers join, his train took him across the Alleghenies ("winding round the ledges... in a most intricate and remarkable manner"); to Pittsburgh ("the forge of the United States"); through Ohio and Indiana ("little smiling villages... burst upon us like sparkling opals from the emerald woods").

Heading south through Illinois, Vizetelly saw the vast American prairie for the first time. As his train rattled toward Cairo, it would "startle the quiet of some little town, a settled island, as it were, in a dried-up inland sea...."

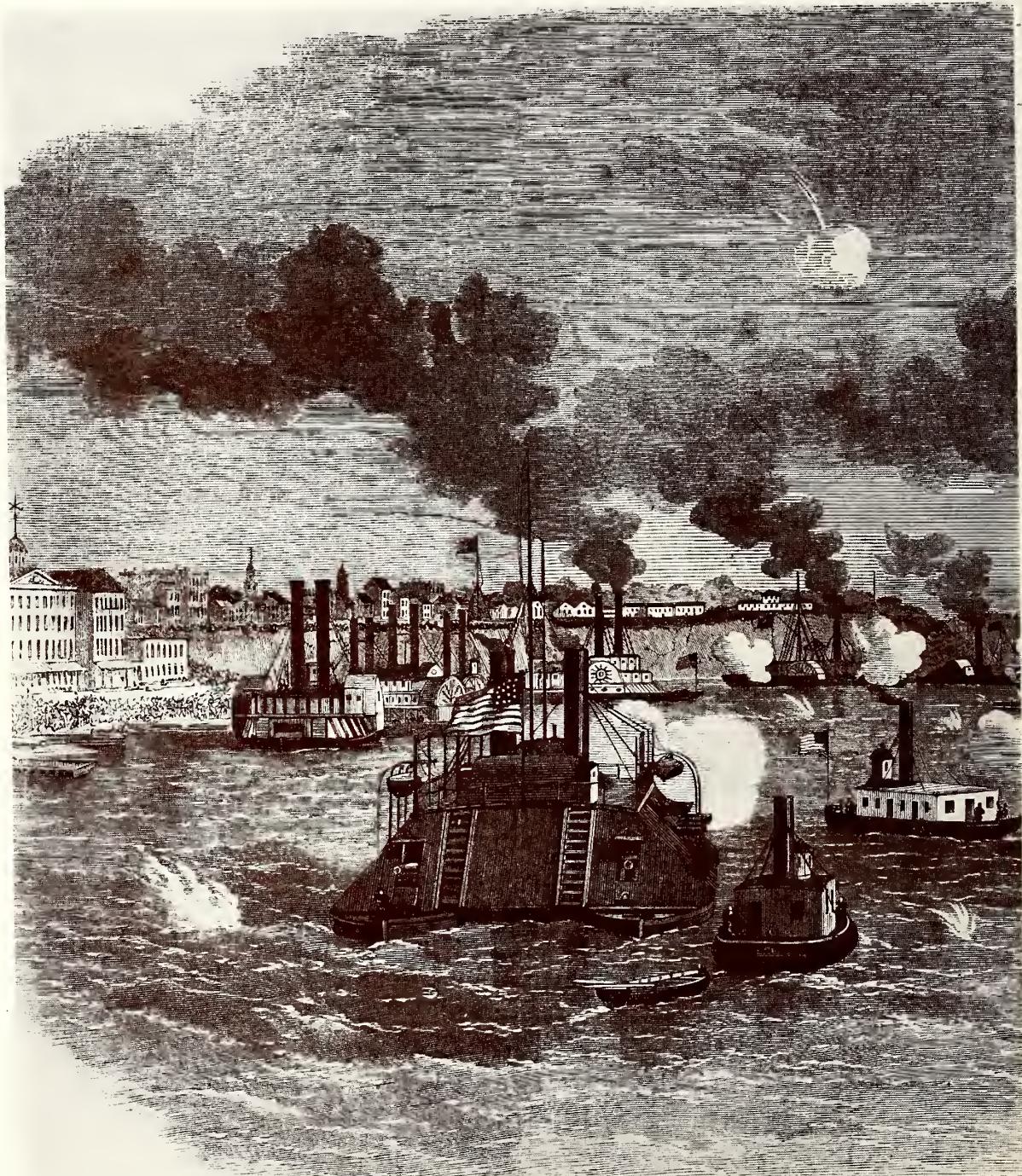
Cairo was the northern springboard of the Federal campaign that in 1862 pushed Confederates from much of the Mississippi Valley. Gunboats swept most of the river and its tributaries clear, and vessels had only the harassing fire of ragged guerrilla bands to worry about (left).

## Ironclads smash cottonclads at Memphis

**A**BRAVE CONFEDERATE FLEET, armored mainly with bales of cotton, defended Memphis, Tennessee, against powerful Federal ironclads at dawn

on June 6, 1862. Vizetelly, with the Federal flotilla, sketched a predictable victory. Gunboats (foreground) and rams polished off the Confederate fleet in short order.

The Federal victory was a tribute to James B. Eads as much as anyone else. A production genius, he hammered out eight ironclads in 100 days at hastily improvised shipyards, and the battle for Memphis was won. His craft

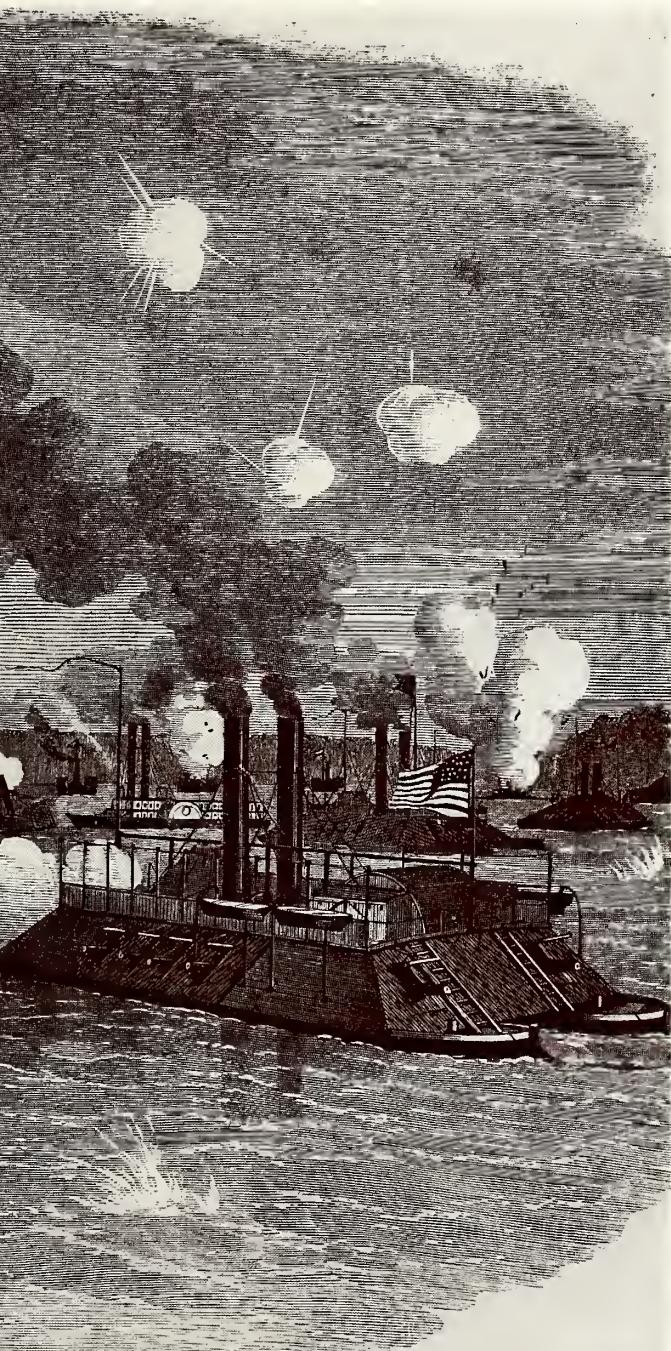


squatted low in the water, with turtlelike superstructures made of heavy wood covered with thick iron plates.

Necessity, not choice, forced Confederates to use cotton armor at Memphis. Here and there, an inspired tinker fashioned old boilers and railroad iron into flimsy protective plating, but generally the South had not the resources to give a man like Eads his head.

Vizetelly, as early as 1862, had a flash of pre-science. He summed up:

"We find that each day the North is developing her gigantic resources; all her foundries are busily engaged... regiment after regiment of well-equipped soldiers flow in legions from her States, and the cry is still 'They come!' Can the South, in the face of all this, maintain their ground? I doubt it."



**T**HE SOUTH'S LIFE LINE, the Mississippi, showed many of its moods and faces to Vizetelly as he pushed his way south with the Federal fleet. He saw high river bluffs "reflecting their dark masses deep into the eddying stream," and, rising from flooded lowlands, "a gauzy veil of violet-toned mist."

At night his boat scudded along the river "shooting a red glare from... open furnaces across the black waters." As the sun rose on the morning of the Battle of Memphis, it bathed "the brown old Mississippi in a flood of light that made its opaque waters fairly sparkle."

Heavy rains brought the river to a high crest that spring—"an ocean in volume flowing through a valley of over three thousand miles...." In the region to the east, a Northern general, Ulysses S. Grant, proved that despite a sorry record in the East, the United States could field an army that would fight. Opposing forces struggled to control the wavering States of Missouri, Kentucky, and Tennessee.

Federal forces under Gen. Henry Halleck finally occupied Corinth, in northern Mississippi, a key rail junction. Vizetelly asked to go cover the campaign, but got an equivocal reply. He could not use army river transports. But, he observed, "There are no others.... Unless Transatlantic journalists are supposed to provide for their transportation by each man paddling his own canoe." So he joined Commodore Charles Davis's naval force, that fought its way down to Memphis.

## Secession dies hard in occupied Memphis

**S**TRETCHING HIMSELF after weeks in a cramped riverboat cabin, Vizetelly scrambled ashore in Memphis (today, below), eager for his first look at the occupied South. What he saw opened his eyes.

"I believed from all I heard that the Secession movement was but skin deep after all," he wrote. Such was not the case in Memphis. "Though the stars and stripes floated from the public buildings, and the supremacy of the Federal Government had been asserted by the Federal arms . . . all were clamouring for separation."

Passions in Memphis had been kindled and fanned by such men as Benjamin Dill, editor of the *Appeal*, who urged townspeople to give no quarter to the invaders. When all seemed lost, Dill loaded his presses on the last train leaving for Mississippi, determined that the voice of the *Appeal* should not be

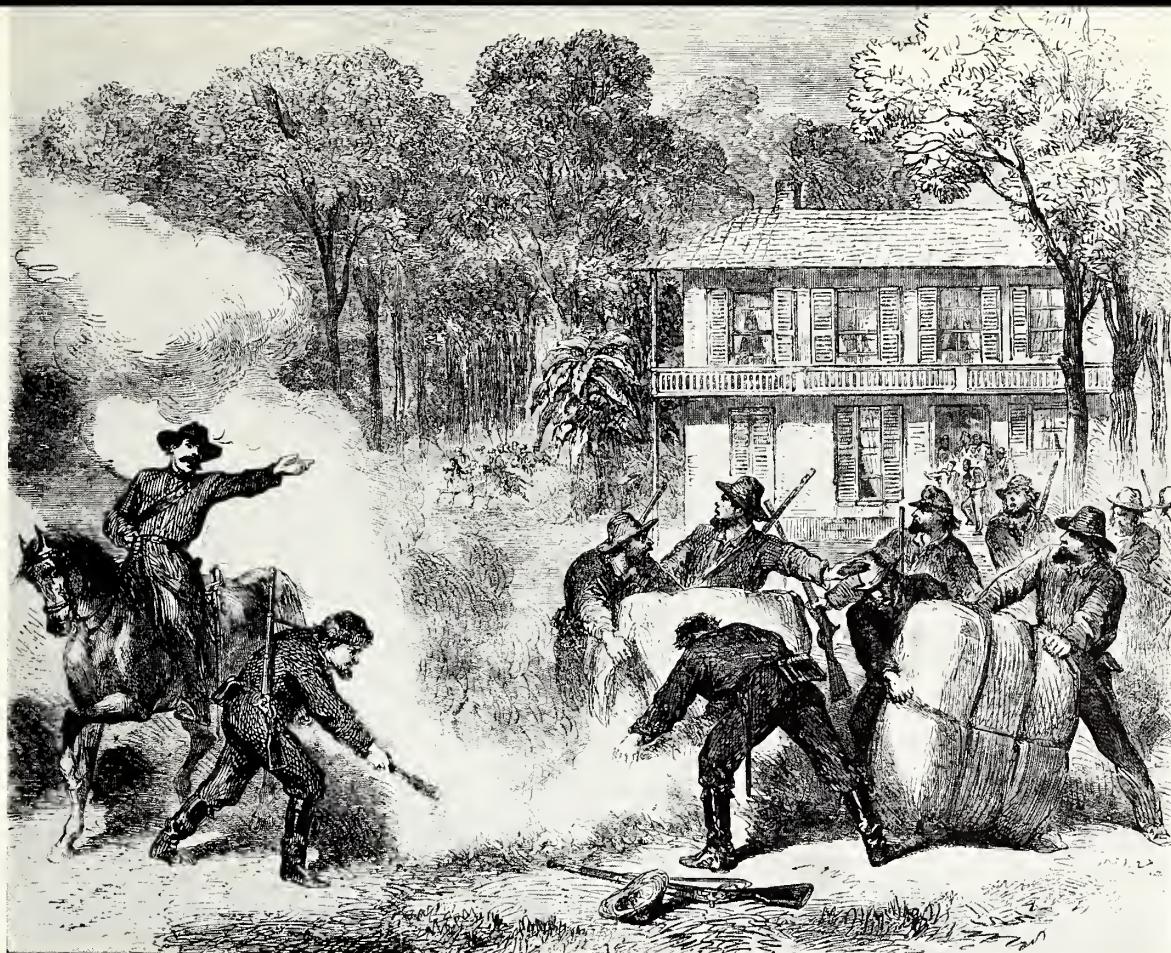
silenced. Then he led a willing crowd of die-hards who burned ten thousand bales of cotton in warehouses and on wharves.

Confederates burned cotton all through the Mississippi Valley to keep it from falling into Federal hands. Scarce on world markets because of the Federal blockade, it was an eagerly sought prize of war.

Vizetelly rode out from Memphis with Indiana cavalry as they swooped down on plantations. Once he sketched Confederates as they fired ripped-open bales (right). He saw the Mississippi "covered by floating masses cast from the bank," and came upon scavengers skimming cotton from the water. Asked why it had been thrown in, they replied: "They say it's by order of the Government, but there aint been no such thing in this *dog-goned* country for over a year."

Federal forces were willing enough to fill the vacuum. By late 1862, they controlled the Mississippi north from New Orleans and south from Memphis, except for a stretch below Vicksburg, last important Confederate river stronghold.





THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL, MEMPHIS © NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY



**A**N ALERT CORRESPONDENT, like a queen in chess, moves in all directions as the game demands. "The thunder of the cannon before Richmond reached me in ominous echoes down the valley of the Mississippi," Vizetelly wrote after he hurried back to Washington. He hoped he might at last join General McClellan's army on the Peninsula. But again the authorities marooned him in Washington. So he did something no chessman can ever do: change sides.

Confederate sympathizers along the Potomac smuggled him past Federal patrols in true cloak-and-dagger style. Afterward he recalled a two-day wait in a dugout canoe hidden among reeds at the river's edge. A patrol boat hovered near by, and he and his guide had to delay their crossing. Fortunately, the reeds concealed an oyster bed. Vizetelly, as usual, dined well.

His arrival in Richmond marked a turning point in the *Illustrated London News* coverage. Until the end of the war, its editors got their stories of Union affairs from other sources. Vizetelly covered the Confederacy.



WIRT A. CHRISTIAN, JR., VIRGINIA STATE LIBRARY © N.G.S.

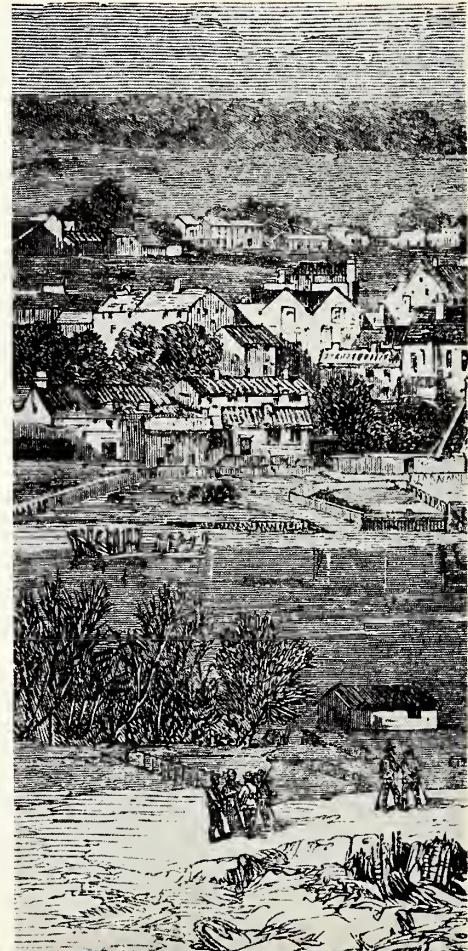
## Grape, shell, and canister at Fredericksburg, 1862

**H**OW DID A RESOURCEFUL, sometimes foolhardy correspondent like Vizetelly go about reporting a major battle? Here he is with the Confederate Army at Fredericksburg, Virginia, in December, 1862—a story told in his words and by a companion.

Before the battle, at a Confederate advance picket post on the river's edge: "The Rappahannock at Fredericksburg [today, above, and in 1862, right] is scarcely more than a hundred yards in width, and this is the distance that divides the Confederates from the Federals."

Few trees lined the river. Instead, there was the litter of war—a burned bridge, a sunken boat, and twisted stumps. The *News* published a drawing by an unidentified artist with Federal forces, showing the buildings and steeples of the pleasant little town, some still standing today. Vizetelly was on the opposite shore with the Confederates.

While he sat sketching, "a sentinel who was leaning on his musket, looking over me, suddenly called out to a blue-coated German on the other side, 'How many men





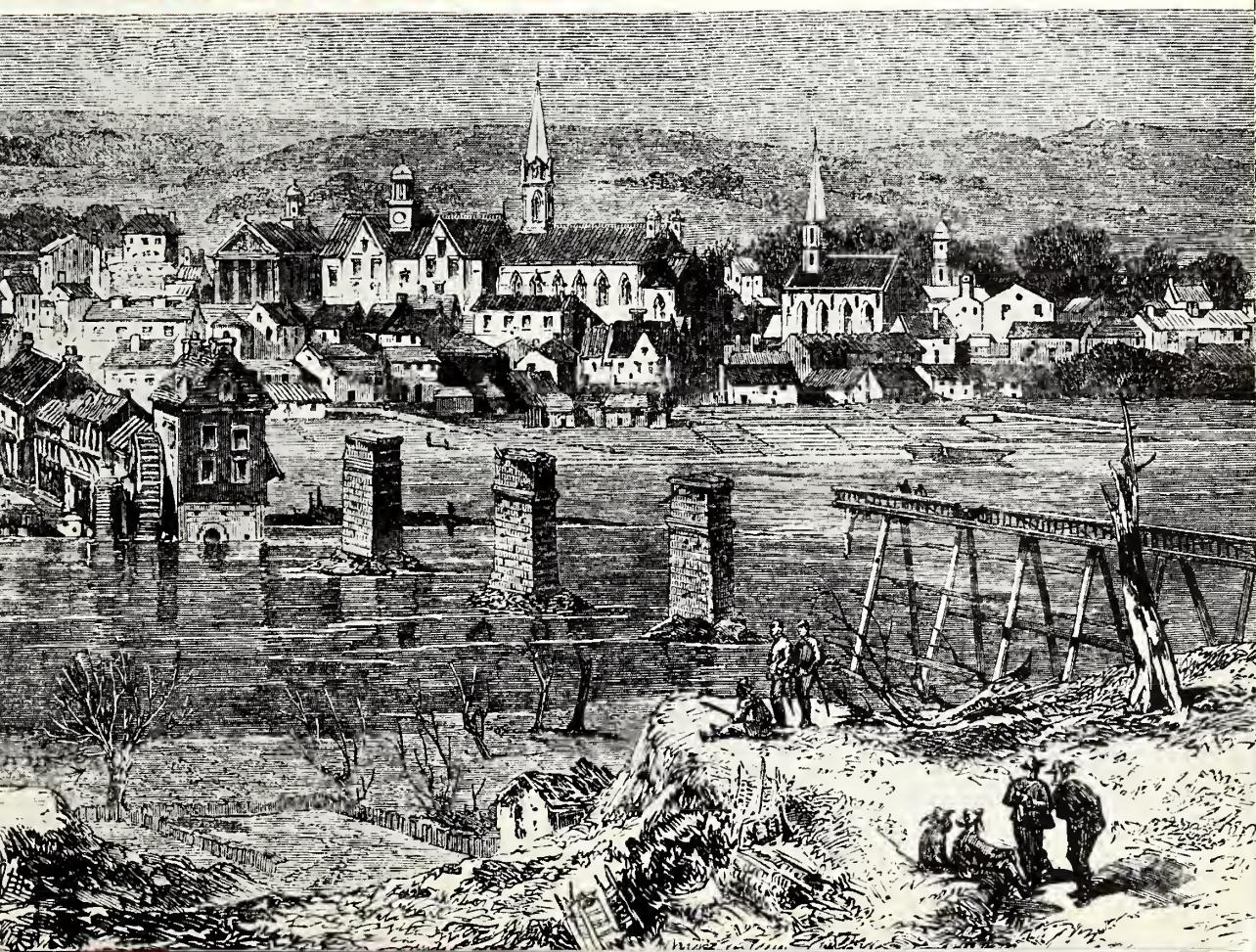
have you got over thar, Yank?" 'Doo or dree dousand,' grunted the Teuton. 'Oh, bring them along; that's nothing. We reckoned you had an army!'"

Again with Vizetelly in camp, before Federal Gen. Ambrose Burnside threw pontoon bridges across the river: "It is whispered at head-quarters today that an attempt will be made by the enemy to cross the river at three different points during the night."

During the tense lull just before the battle: "I am lying out in the pine-woods at the advance, ready to wield my pencil when the struggle begins. Every shot we hear as we lie with our feet to the fire during the long cold nights starts us on our legs.... What a bursting of shells over my bed there will be when the ball opens!"

At the battle's height, wave after wave of Federal soldiers charged up the hill behind Fredericksburg (background) at the entrenched Confederate Army: "From the point where I stood, with Generals Lee and Longstreet, I could see the grape, shell, and canister from the guns... mow great avenues in

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the masses of Federal troops rushing to the assault, while the infantry... decimated the nearest columns...."

After the battle, when the riddled Federal Army had fallen back across the river in defeat: "I counted 660 dead lying on a small plot of ground."

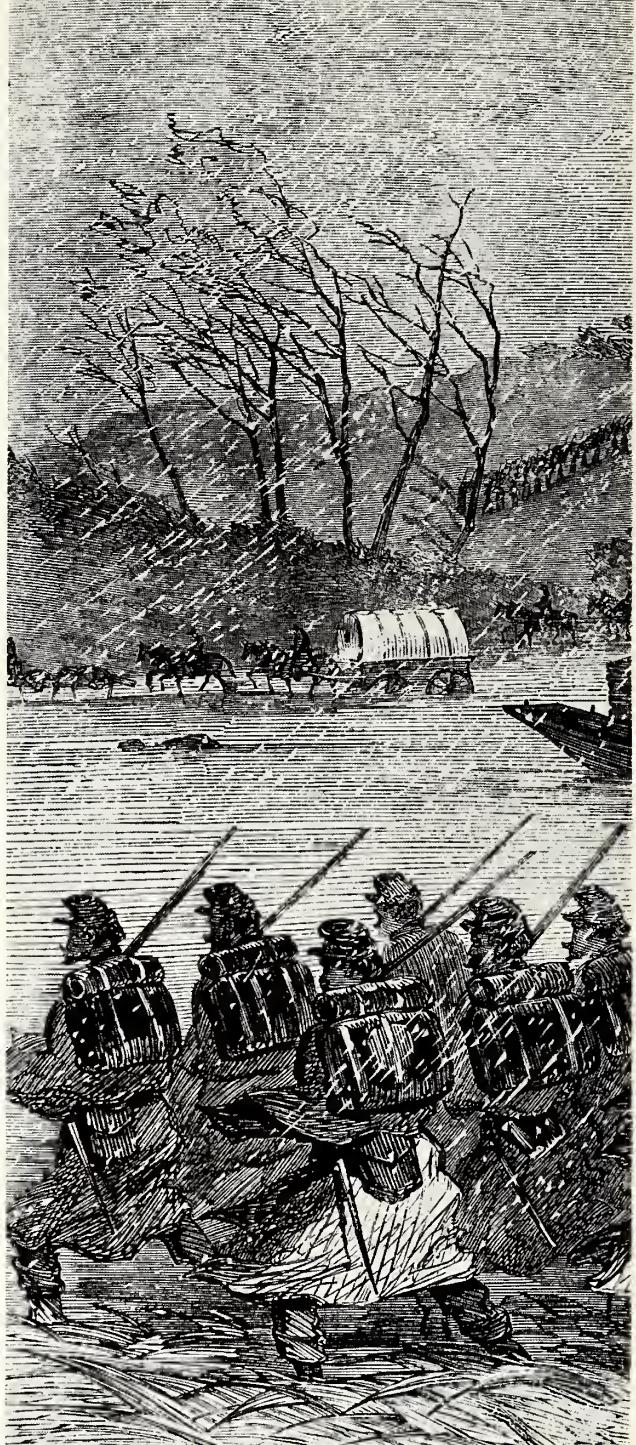
Still later, he rode out to meet a detachment bringing in Federal prisoners. A staff officer, Heros von Borcke, recalls Vizetelly under fire: "He had just entered into conversation with a corporal from a South Carolina regiment... when the hostile batteries... opened fire, and one of their very first shells, passing quite close to our friend, tore the head of the poor fellow with whom he was talking completely off his shoulders....

"Horror-stricken at this sad incident, and having no call of duty to remain, the artist at once put spurs into his charger's flanks, and galloped off as fast as the noble steed could carry him. But the hostile gunners seemed to take particular pleasure in aiming at the flying horseman, and ever closer and closer flew the unpleasant missiles about his ears, while we who from Lee's Hill were spectators... were for some time seriously alarmed that we should never again hear his merry laugh and joyous songs; but at last he reached us in safety, though much exhausted, and was received with loud cheering in our midst."

**D**ISHEARTENED but still game after the bloody repulse at Fredericksburg, General Burnside pulled his army together. He tried to push it across the Rappahannock upstream to flank the Confederates, but failed. The Federals, pelted by rain and sleet, waded through streams and slogged along roads of bottomless mud in yet another retreat (right).

Again, Robert E. Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia had saved Richmond and the Confederacy. Sharing its camps, marches, and battles on and off for three years, Vizetelly came to know this amazing fighting force well. "I am lost in admiration at its splendid patriotism, at its wonderful endurance, at its utter disregard for hardships..." sings one of his accolades.

Commanded through most of the war by Lee, and led in battle by his able lieutenants — men such as Stonewall Jackson, James



Longstreet, and Jeb Stuart — this Confederate army twice, at Antietam and Gettysburg, carried the war into the North. At home it fended off repeated Federal offensives. Vizetelly described its Virginia battlefields: "a classic ground, crimsoned with deeds that will make history for the future."

Usually outnumbered by armies sent against them, Southern commanders patched and maneuvered to make every ragged sol-



dier count. The men spiced hard fighting with fun. The same soldiers Vizetelly saw advancing "to meet their foes, the light of battle shining on their countenances, determined to be victorious or die," could while away the tedium, as they did before the Battle of Fredericksburg, with a monster snowball fight involving entire divisions.

And men dancing around a campfire at night, perhaps pitching frozen oysters into

its embers to roast, would bawl out "The Perfect Cure"—"one of the favorite songs of the day in the London music halls... introduced to our notice by Vizetelly."

Friends beyond number fell "in the awful drama that has spread desolation over many a once smiling acre of Virginia soil.... In many a distant clump of pine wood slept their last sleep those whom I had known in life. *Requiescant in pace.*"



## Aristocratic Charleston makes war a social event

**G**ENERAL RIPLEY yesterday reviewed the garrison at Fort Sumter. The review was witnessed by quite a number of spectators, including . . . Mr. F. Vizetelly . . . the correspondent of the *London Illustrated News*, and several ladies." — The *Mercury*, Charleston, S. C., January 20, 1863.

Sociable Mr. Vizetelly and sociable Charleston met on grim ground. He picked his way south from Richmond, determined to see the city where the war began, and arrived to find a Federal blockading fleet cruising steadily back and forth at the harbor's mouth, stitching one of the few remaining holes in the sack that slowly smothered the Confederacy.

Charleston, aristocratic and assured, faced it all calmly. Ladies and their escorts and crowds of frolicking Negroes turned out on

April 7, when Adm. Samuel du Pont vainly hurled his ironclads at Fort Sumter (above).

Vizetelly watched from a parapet of the fort. The garrison ran up its flags, a band blared "Dixie," and officers, playing Drake in the face of the Federal armada, finished dinner between the time the fleet advanced at 2 p.m. and firing began an hour later.

Insulated from Federal armies by the breadth and depth of the Confederacy, and harassed but not seriously threatened by the blockading fleet, Charleston preserved some of the Old South's amenities and gaiety. The *Mercury* chronicled life in the city Vizetelly knew and loved so well.

"Hibernian Hall. A Grand Ball and May Festival will be given by the Amicita Club this evening, May 1st. The services of the Celebrated Palmetto Band have been engaged for the occasion."

Today, hoop-skirted girls and Citadel cadets recall the spirit of the time in a Charleston ballroom (right).





Vizetelly learned firsthand about the blockade later in the war. He stood on the deck of the *Lillian* (above) as the swift steamer slipped away from a Federal cruiser (background). In Charleston, however, he saw the blockade from shore.

Despite the Federals, munitions, fancy dress goods, and even books slipped in. Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* was one: "With what refreshment we welcome into our blockaded world a work by Boz...."

There were other refreshments: "Dr. Cohen's Soda Water Fountain . . . is the only one of the kind running in the Confederacy." And to quench the heat of a blistering Carolina summer, Messrs. Marjenhoff and Bredenberg "have on hand . . . a large supply of Hamburg Lager Beer."

**B**UT AN UGLY THREAD runs through the *Mercury*'s columns, reminder of the South's "peculiar institution."

"Negroes sold remarkably high yesterday," a report says, with stock-market matter-of-factness. Advertisements sometimes listed entire families: "Mary 89, Rose 17 . . . Anna 8, Team 6, Eliza 2, and Infant 8 months."

## Today's *News* continues a great tradition

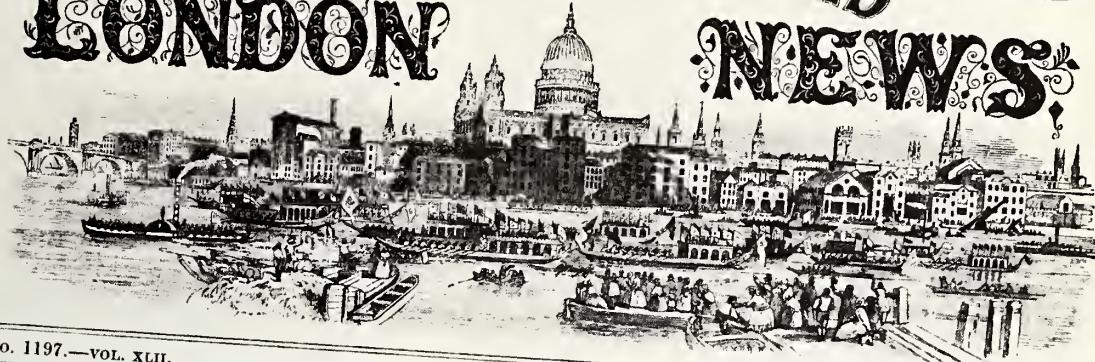
**V**IZETELLY'S DRAWINGS and dispatches competed for space in the *Illustrated London News* with accounts of other wars, treaties, and the obituaries of eminent persons—all of interest to empire-conscious English readers.

A pioneer in global reporting, the *News* might feature an article about the Polish situation, and complete the page with a Vizetelly drawing of rare Confederate ironclads chewing at Federal ships near Charleston (right). Ironclads notwithstanding, blockaders bottled up much of Vizetelly's material.

In 1960 the Board of Trustees of the National Geographic Society presented Sir Bruce Ingram with a Jane M. Smith life membership in the Society. The award recognized his extraordinary contributions to geography through the *Illustrated London News*, which he has edited for the past 60 years. His grandfather, Herbert Ingram, founded the magazine in 1842.

Stamped Edition, 6d.

# THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS.



No. 1197.—VOL. XLII.

SATURDAY, APRIL 4, 1863.

TWO SHEETS, FIVEPENCE

## CONGRESS TO ENFORCE THE RIGHTS OF POLAND.

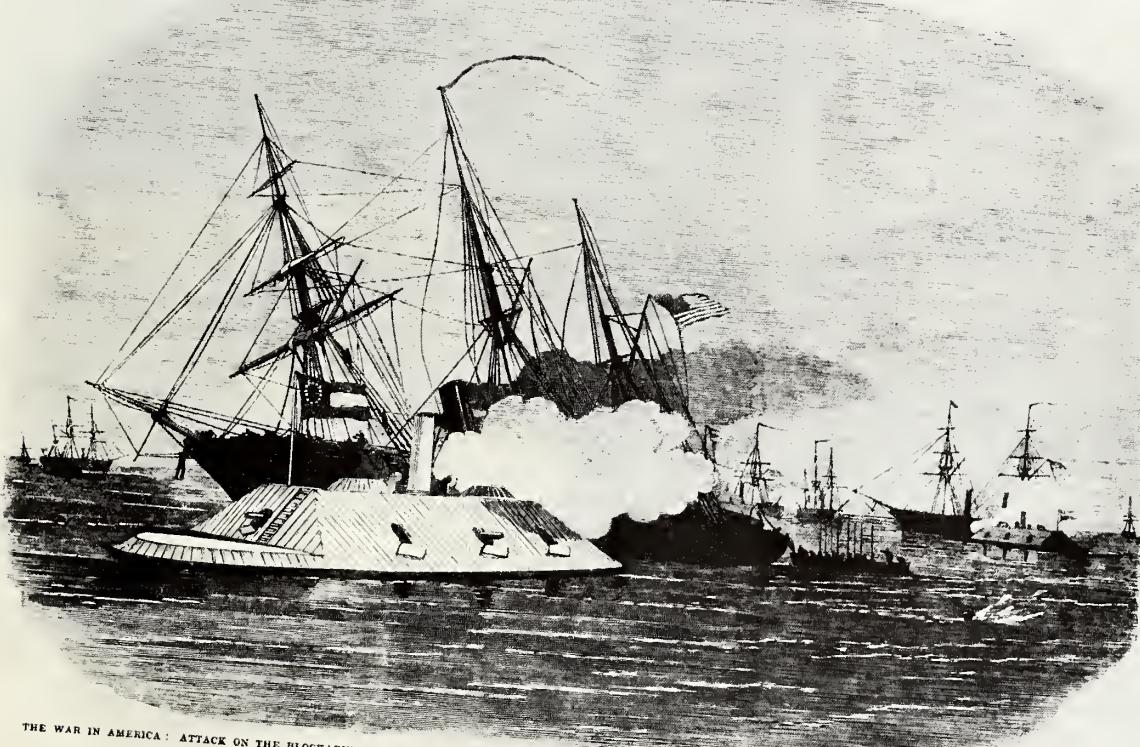
A FEW hours before Parliament adjourned for the Easter holidays, Lord Palmerston, in reply to an inquiry put to him by Mr. Heunesey, announced in somewhat general terms that England and France had agreed upon a course of diplomatic action in reference to the affairs of Poland, and that he believed the papers which he hoped to lay before both Houses soon after Easter would satisfy the country as to the steps which the Government had taken on behalf of that unhappy nation. We suppose there can be but little room to doubt the authenticity of the information given to the British public in the *Times* of the same date, to the effect that, "both as members of the community of nations, the civilisation of which has been outraged by the tyranny of the Russian Government, and as parties to the Treaty of Vienna, the chief States of Europe have felt themselves compelled to consider their relations with Poland, and to take counsel as to the best means of removing a great scandal and a danger to the peace of the world." The noble Premier, it is true, did not, in words, corroborate this announcement, but neither did he deny its accuracy; so that, piecing together the authoritative language

of the *Times* on Friday morning and the more reticent phrases of Lord Palmerston on Friday night, we are tolerably safe in concluding that England and France are unitedly seeking a congress of those European Powers whose representatives signed the Treaty of 1815, to which Russia will be invited that she may at once explain her own case, and accept or reject the decision of Europe.

We can well understand why the leading Governments of Europe should entertain objections to the assembling of a general congress, and should discourage a resort to the moral coercion which this kind of international machinery may bring to bear upon States supposed to be chargeable with the offence of misruling their own subjects. Each is desirous, as a matter of course, of preserving intact its own sovereign rights, and is therefore cautious of trespassing upon those of others. But the relations of Russia and Poland are so peculiar, the title of the other Powers of Europe to deal with them is a matter of such express treaty stipulation, and the peace of the world would be so endangered by a continued refusal to act upon that title, that general objections are overborne by the pressure of the particular case, and it has become safer to employ irresistible diplomatic action for the protection of the Poles than to be governed in this instance by the modern and

generally-accepted principle of non-intervention. The truth is, that Poland has never yet surrendered her rightful claim to be considered an independent nation. The partition of the old kingdom of Poland in 1772 by Russia, Austria, and Prussia was a crime which the conscience of Europe has never condoned; and the earliest provisions of the Treaty of Vienna in 1815 prove that all the parties to that great international instrument, Russia included, formally recognised the right of the Poles, under whatever sovereignty, to retain inviolate the nationality of their kingdom.

We accept Lord Palmerston's interpretation of the treaty as the true one. It is a public engagement in which the several subscribing Powers pledge themselves to each other in relation to the distribution amongst them of political authority, an engagement which gives a European sanction to all the stipulations it contains, which entitles each Power to use the whole force at its command, should it be so advised, to enforce upon any of the other Powers an observance of its provisions, but which does not bind any of them to draw upon its own resources, or to risk its own well-being in the attempt to give effect to the common agreement. We are under no treaty obligation to preserve to Poland the rights which that instrument solemnly recognised as hers; we are not even morally bound to go to war in her



THE WAR IN AMERICA: ATTACK ON THE BLOCKADING SQUADRON OFF CHARLESTON BY IRON-CLAD GUN-BOATS.—FROM A SKETCH BY OUR SPECIAL ARTIST.—SEE PAGE 372.

## "A few yards of canvas" shelter Vicksburg refugees

GEN. U. S. GRANT preferred to slug with his opponents toe to toe. But in one of the war's decisive campaigns, he maneuvered for months and finally pirouetted around the defenders of Vicksburg, Mississippi, picking them off with an easy grace reminiscent of Stonewall Jackson at his best.

Vizetelly, on the scene, understood what he saw. "The campaign... will, I believe, decide the duration of the war."

The Confederacy hung by its finger tips to a short stretch of the Mississippi River around

EKTACHROME BY NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PHOTOGRAPHER THOMAS NEBBIA © N.G.S.



Vicksburg—last link with its western States. When Vizetelly hurried west from Charleston, Federal forces had already slipped between the city and the rest of Mississippi, and Federal ships closed the river. Grant tightened a noose around Vicksburg and Gen. John C. Pemberton's besieged Confederate Army. Vizetelly reached Jackson, forty miles to the east, and joined Gen. Joseph Johnston, who was unable to raise the siege.

"The town is completely invested," Vizetelly wrote, "and we



only get intelligence by an occasional courier, who runs the gauntlet of the Yankee lines."

Today, Federal and Confederate dead share the fields over which they fought (**left**).

On July 4, 1863, Vicksburg surrendered. Its fall opened the river, split the Confederacy, and forecast its defeat.

Marching armies swept the country around Vicksburg, and savage bands of guerrillas and deserters pillaged what was left. Routed from their homes, women, children, and loyal slaves huddled in makeshift camps (**above**). "With nothing but a few yards of canvas to protect them from the frequent thunderstorms which burst in terrific magnificence at this season of the year over Mississippi,

they support with dignity their heavy trial," Vizetelly wrote.

He may have ridden into camp with a courier bringing mail. For despite war's devastation, life went on somehow. There were reunions, marriages, births, and deaths. Especially deaths—not all of them in battle.

**D**IED ON THE 18TH INSTANT," read an obituary that summer in a near-by newspaper, "Mary Belle Key, only daughter of Capt. John T. and Helen Shaaff. A weary little pilgrim with an age of suffering on its baby head, and yet three years to its life has gone to Him who bade little children to come."



THE CIVIL WAR IN AMERICA: TRAIN WITH REINFORCEMENTS FOR GENERAL JOHNSTON RUNNING OFF THE TRACK IN THE FORESTS OF MISSISSIPPI.  
FROM A SKETCH BY OUR SPECIAL ARTIST.



THE CIVIL WAR IN AMERICA: RE-OCCUPATION OF JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI, BY THE CONFEDERATES.—FROM A SKETCH BY OUR SPECIAL ARTIST.—SEE PRECEDING PAGE.



## Wrecks, fires, shellings— Vizetelly was there

**T**RAIN WRECKS, burning cities, and bombardments flashed before Vizetelly like patterns in a kaleidoscope as he dashed about the Confederacy. A nose for great events, a liking for adventure, and inexhaustible energy drove him to places where the war's outcome was being decided, and to him, as to today's tourist, getting there was often half the fun.

Of his jolting journey from Charleston to Jackson, Mississippi, over the South's casually built, haphazardly maintained railway system, he wrote: "Three times the cars ran off the line [left, top] . . . and on one of these occasions . . . I was unaware of what had taken place until I shook myself together, and then I found that my arm was badly bruised."

Vizetelly sketched Gen. Joseph Johnston's army marching into one end of Jackson (left, bottom) as Federals burned the other. The

traditional cheering section of Southern gentlewomen turned out—they seemed drawn to battles as if by a magnet.

Vicksburg fell, and Vizetelly returned to Charleston. During the summer, Federal forces established a beachhead and inched their way toward the harbor. Cleverly floating a monster cannon nicknamed "Swamp Angel" on timbers in a marsh four and a half miles away, they opened fire on the city early in the morning of August 22, 1863.

Again, Vizetelly was there. He sketched the scene (above), noting "a watchman . . . is taking leave of his senses and his staff in the foreground."

Later, he and Fitzgerald Ross, an English soldier of fortune, walked to the Charleston waterfront. "We could hear the whizz of the shells long before they passed over our heads," Ross wrote, "and I offered V. a thousand to one that a shell we heard coming would not hit either of us. He took the odds—forgetting that if he won he would have had but a small chance of realizing his wager—and, of course, I won my dollar."



## Victory at Chickamauga, then disaster

**C**HICKAMAUGA... was one of the most brilliant victories ever gained by the South, though, unfortunately, not decisive in its results..." Vizetelly reported from the battlefield.

The war swept from the East to the Mississippi in the last six months of 1863. Lee's thrust into Pennsylvania was stopped at Gettysburg the same day Grant took Vicksburg. In September, action erupted at Chattanooga, key to eastern Tennessee.

When Vizetelly arrived, Confederates had crossed Chickamauga Creek north of Lee and Gordon's Mills (above), and soon the armies grappled in earnest. Vizetelly scoured

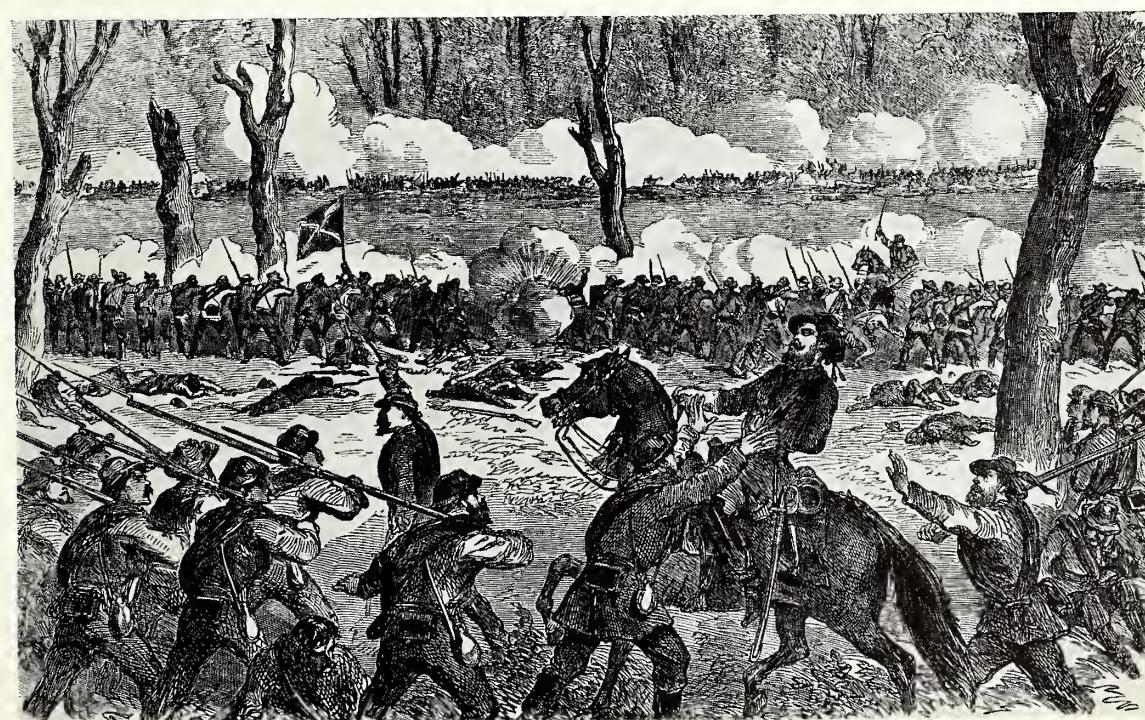
the woods for a vantage point, but found none, "not being able to see more than a hundred yards either way...." Similarly handicapped, Confederates still managed to drive the enemy back into Chattanooga and bottle them up.

At the battle's height, Gen. John Bell Hood, one of the Confederates Vizetelly delighted in spraying with pure essence of chivalry, fell (right) when "an Enfield ball passed through his right thigh, smashing the bone to pieces...." Hard luck for "the Bayard of the Confederate army, literally *sans peur et sans reproche*...."

The bewildered Confederate victor, Gen. Braxton Bragg, let Federal forces regroup ("You are a coward," stormed his subordinate, Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest), and soon the Federals counterattacked, winning back what had been lost, and more.



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DAVID C. RICE © NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

## Vizetelly romps in wartime Richmond

**C**APITAL OF THE CONFEDERACY, Richmond, Virginia, saw Vizetelly at his frothy, delightful best. Capering through drawing-room entertainments, poking about munitions factories and prison camps, tearing off at intervals to campaign with his friends Jeb Stuart and Robert E. Lee, he behaved precisely as a glamorous war correspondent should.

Many of his dispatches from Richmond failed to slip by the blockade, but happily, memoirs of his friends fill in the picture.

The city, dominated by its imposing Capitol (above, and in Vizetelly's drawing right), was a swollen shadow of the pleasant, provincial capital of Virginia. In it were crammed

the Confederate government, the State government of Virginia, the South's most important industries, the junction of several strategic railroads, huge hospitals, prison camps, supplies for whole armies, and, periodically, the armies themselves.

**R**ICHMOND played its role as seat of the Confederacy seriously and sometimes self-consciously. Hostesses improvised frantically to hide gaps and shortages no self-respecting *ante bellum* establishment would have tolerated. High officials, distinguished foreigners, profiteers, and officers (many of whom would have been quite unacceptable by prewar Richmond social standards) thronged to receptions, balls, and dinners. Vizetelly, when available, was yeast in this heavy loaf. His infectious spirits leavened many an evening that might otherwise have fallen flat.

Mrs. Burton Harrison, a wartime belle, recalled him as "a big, florid, red-bearded Bohemian, of a type totally unfamiliar to us Virginians, who could and would do anything to entertain a circle. In our theatricals... he was a treasure-trove.... He painted our scenery and faces, made wigs and armor... sang songs, told stories, danced *pas seuls*, and was generally most kind and amusing."

One evening, Jeb Stuart bungled his duties as stagehand in a Vizetelly production. Mrs. Harrison, who felt the lapse keenly, tells the story: "I, as a rustic maiden, was to divide my smiles between Colonel John Saunders, an humble swain of my own estate, and Vizetelly, a plumed cavalier with a purse of gold to offer...." She perched on a rustic stage-prop stile, one end of it held up by Stuart, daydreaming behind the scenes, and as "Vizetelly was prepared to make his swaggering entrance... my perch gave way and I slid to the ground."

Late in 1863, Vizetelly, FitzGerald Ross, and a party of friends proved there was no food shortage in the Confederacy—if one had the price. A dinner for nine at the Oriental Saloon included venison, game birds, Madeira, claret, and Havana cigars—all for \$631.50 in inflated Confederate currency.

But theatricals and venison suppers were shiny plating on the hard, common metal of Richmond life. Most people, coping somehow with everlasting deprivation caused by cruel lack of necessities and skyrocketing prices, did not fare so well.

The war even affected the course of true love; punctuation may have been missing from the letter young Fannie Tyndall wrote to her future husband, serving with the 10th Virginia Cavalry, but sentiment there was in full measure:

"Shelley although the parting goes harder & harder with me every time I want to see you as often as I can it is so long between the times that I see & hear from [you] it is to me if not so to you."

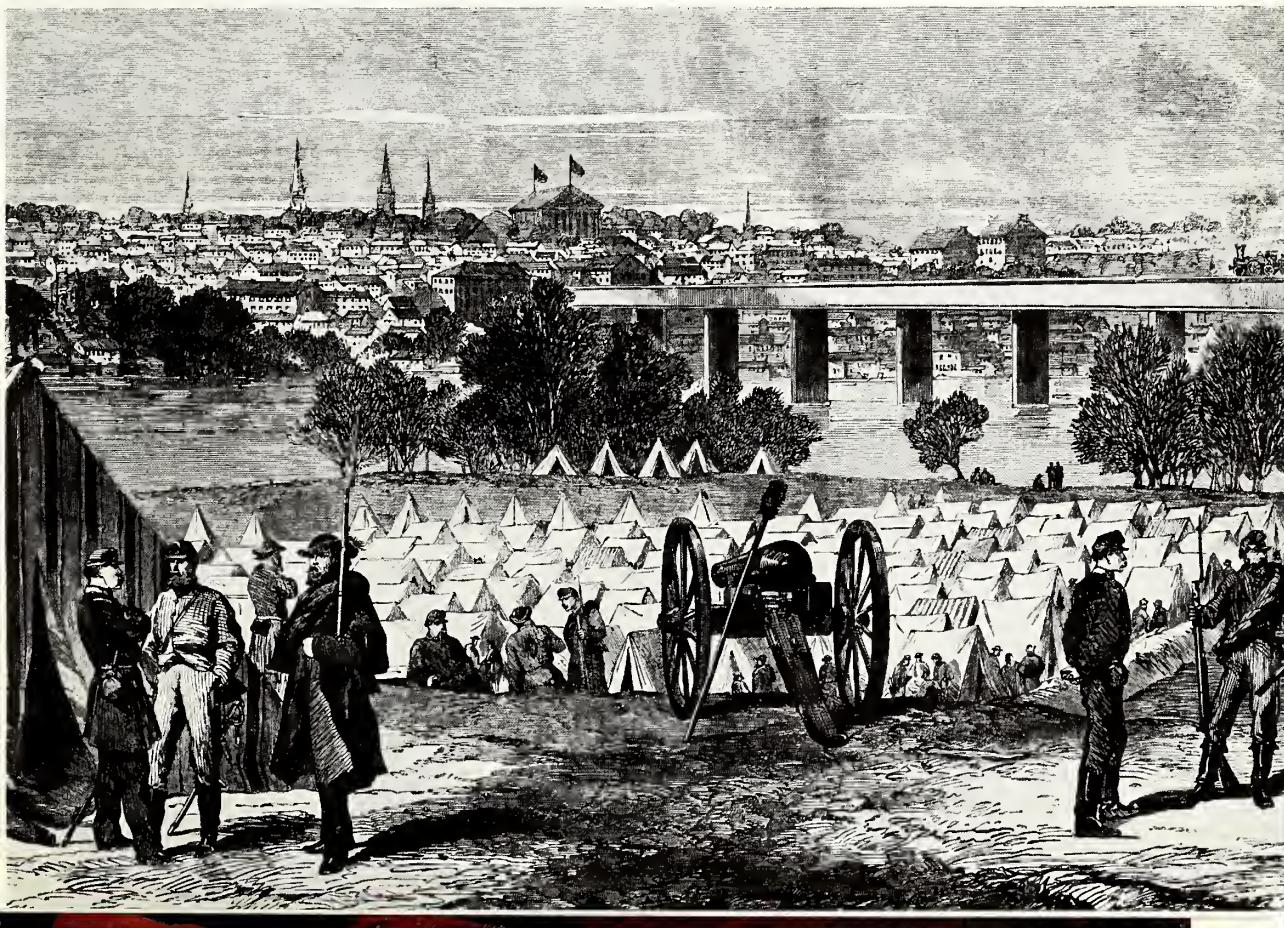
Richmond, although never truly besieged, was often menaced by driving Federal armies,

determined to capture it and end the war. McClellan pushed to its suburbs in 1862, and Lee and Grant, wheeling in desperate efforts to outflank each other, circled close to the east in 1864 before falling into a bloody stalemate to the south at Petersburg.

Bravely, the city held out, heartened but in the end not succored by words of the Book of Joel flung from pulpits:

"But I will remove far off from you the northern army, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate...."

**A**T CAMPS like Belle Isle (below), Federal prisoners waiting out endless days probably thought the life of the humblest free Richmonder wonderful beyond description. Vizetelly looked closely at prison conditions—reports in the North told of starvation and mistreatment. He concluded that the besieged Confederacy was doing its best; unfortunately the best was not very good. "The rations which I saw distributed to the prisoners were in every respect the same as those issued to the Southern soldier; possibly the former may get more fresh meat...."



## A merry Christmas with Jeb Stuart's boys

A REALIST, surveying the Confederacy and its chances at Christmas, 1863, could have found scant reason for comfort and joy. But Gen. James E. B. Stuart and his rollicking cavalry command (**below**) always made the best of even a bad situation, and Vizetelly and FitzGerald Ross accepted eagerly his invitation to spend the holidays with his command.

They sat "around a roaring fire in the General's tent," Ross recalled. Sam and Dick Sweeny "played the banjo and violin; V., who is a great favourite of the General's, told some of his best stories...."

Jeb Stuart seemed to vault from the pages of a romantic novel into the war, but beneath all the glitter and fun lay hard, professional efficiency. Not until late in the war did Federal cavalry learn to fight as well.

Of course Stuart liked Vizetelly. He was "the most interesting narrator I have ever listened to around a campfire," an aide recalled. "There was not a disreputable or reputable place in the civilized world that he did not know all about, and his accounts of his gallantries in Paris and other parts of the world were as interesting as a novel."





## "A line is only as strong as its weakest point"

WHEN VIZETELLY returned to Virginia in June, 1864, after slipping through the blockade to visit London, he found a ragged, reeling Confederacy. "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" was inspiring the Union to redouble its war effort—it sang of "the watchfires of a hundred circling camps," and they burned brighter than ever. But the strains of "Dixie" were fading, and, one by one, Confederate hopes flickered and died.

Remorseless generals led growing Federal armies, and, as they ground out victories, the

irrepressible optimism that had buoyed Confederates faded. As the odds lengthened, they depended more and more on men like Col. John S. Mosby (above, center), a quiet Virginian who brought true tactical genius to his terrible guerrilla trade.

His fast-moving band harassed Federal columns ("As a line is only as strong as its weakest point, it was necessary for it to be stronger than I was at every point, in order to resist my attacks," he wrote). He provoked retaliation in kind. ("I will... let them know there is a God in Israel," grimly vowed Federal Gen. Philip Sheridan.)

Mosby's men melted into the Virginia countryside between raids. Vizetelly sniffed out one of their rendezvous in the Blue Ridge Mountains, and he met Mosby there.



## War scorches the earth of the green Shenandoah

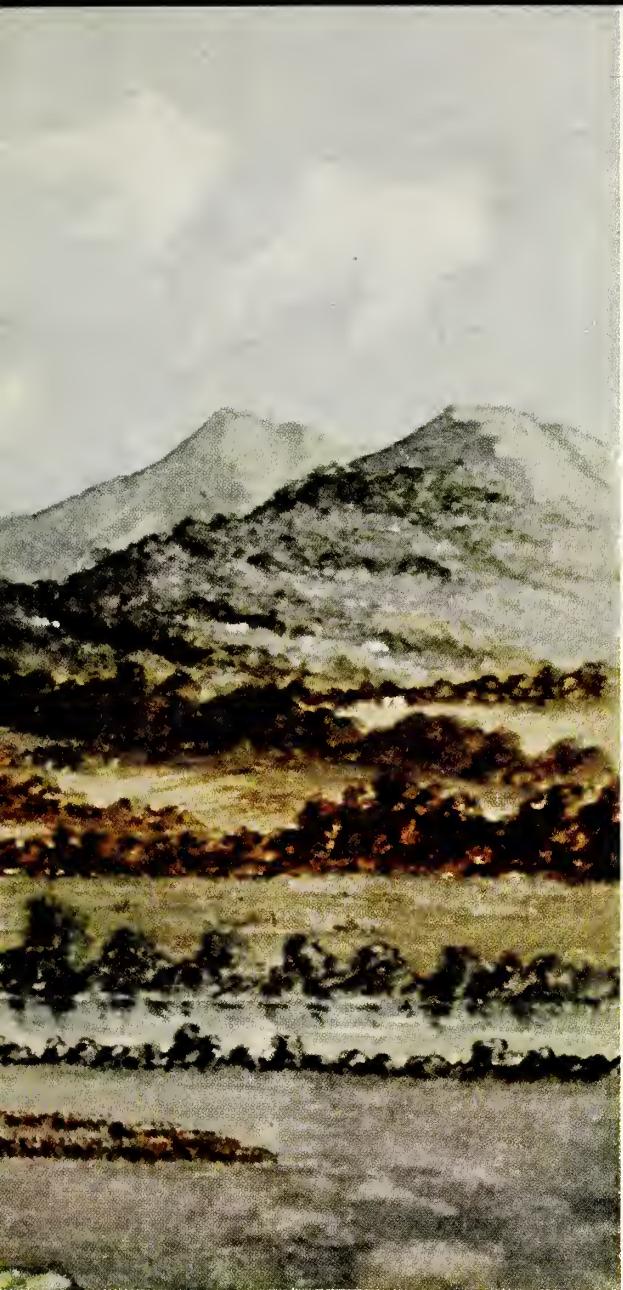
**W**EARY OF A WAR that seemed destined to drag on forever, the Federal Government, in 1864, ordered General Sheridan to destroy everything in Virginia's lush, beautiful Shenandoah Valley.

Vizetelly, with the outnumbered Confederate force (**above**) that sparred unsuccessfully against Sheridan, reported that even in occasional retreats, the Federals carried out

their grim mission, "burning and laying waste every homestead in their track... treating the State of Virginia as a hostile country."

Gen. William T. Sherman in the Deep South, Sheridan, and other commanders turned to scorched-earth tactics for a simple reason. Regions like the Shenandoah supported Confederate armies, and as long as these armies remained in the field, war would continue. Americans had the unpleasant distinction of fighting the first modern total war—where an acre of ground that fed a soldier or a homestead that sent him off to fight became a logical military objective.

Vizetelly's sketch, later tinted, shows Ker-



## Hope might ebb, but courage never

**A**LTHOUGH IT WAS LICKED by the end of 1864, the Confederacy clung to the illusion that it could fight on. Federal forces hacked at the remains of a crumbling nation. Grant gripped its throat below Richmond, armies in the West and the blockade in the Atlantic pinned its arms, and Gen. William T. Sherman slashed a wide swath of destruction across its soft midsection, from Atlanta to the sea.

Somehow, Confederates scraped together troops and supplies and continued to fight a gallant holding action. Hope might ebb, but courage never.

Vizetelly described eager Texans in an unplanned assault against Federal trenches before Petersburg: "They straggled to the front by twos and threes, despite every effort to keep them back. At last, the whole body, officers and men, gave a yell, and, with one rush, they were in the works. The Yankees fled pell-mell to a line of intrenchments beyond, leaving heaps of dead and dying."

The Confederacy's generals, magnificent tacticians to the last, yielded slowly and stubbornly. They put a fearfully high price on every foot of ground, but the North, while it winced at the terrible cost in lives, showed in victory after victory that it was willing to pay.

The Civil War reached no awesome climax; it had no Waterloo where both sides gambled for victory on the outcome of a single battle. Instead, attrition defeated the Confederacy. Federal forces squeezed it inexorably to death. The ultimate surrender was almost a formality, for there was precious little left in the South to give up.

One thing there was left, though, and that was a sense of humor. During the war's final days, a spick-and-span Federal detachment surprised a tattered, dejected North Carolinian, scavenging for his supper.

"Surrender, surrender," they yelled, "we've got you!"

The weary Rebel dropped his gun. "Yes, you've got me," he said, "and the hell of a git you got!"

shaw's and Fitz Lee's divisions uncoiling into the valley from Front Royal (background) near the Blue Ridge Mountains. They joined Gen. Jubal Early's army in a futile bid to hold the Shenandoah Valley.

Skilled artists in London redrew Vizetelly sketches on blocks of close-grained Turkish boxwood bolted together. The blocks were then separated and parceled out among engravers. Each cut his part of the drawing into the wood. Finished segments were bolted together again, a wax impression made, and the wax plated with copper. Printing was done with the copper plate. Some engravings were as large as 9 by 12 inches.

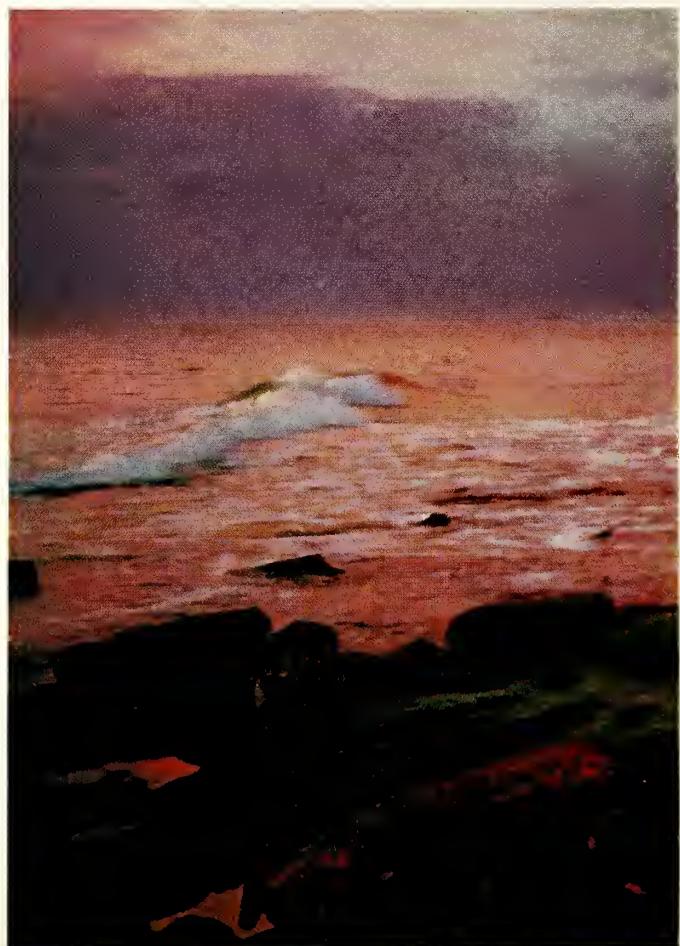


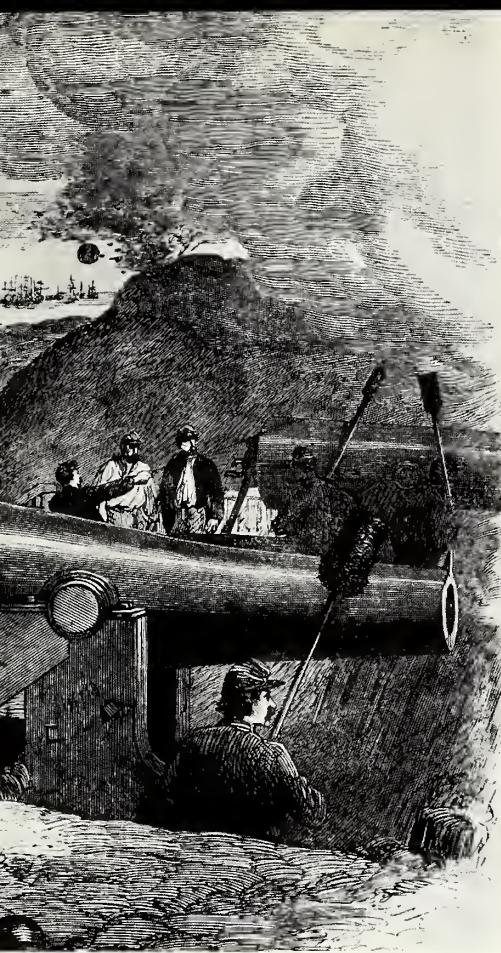
## Fort Fisher's fall slams the last door

THE CONFEDERACY'S fortunes were moored to booming ports like Wilmington, North Carolina. Daredevil captains slipped fast steamers loaded with priceless munitions—and useless but eagerly sought luxuries—past blockading Federal cruisers to safety under the Confederate guns of Fort Fisher; the fort, now washed away, squatted on a sandspit that ran out from shore (right).

In 1864, Vizetelly and Francis Lawley, of the London *Times*, ran into Wilmington on the *Lillian* (page 474). Lawley described the voyage:

"Silently and with bated breath we passed cruiser after cruiser, distinctly visible to every eye....





Another moment and we are under the mound upon which stands the fort, and eagerly questioned for news. 'The news is good all round.' Cheers rang out. 'Three times three for General Johnston; six times six for General Lee'; and in mirth and laughter and song the night wears away."

As the blockade tightened, port after port either fell into Federal hands or, tightly guarded, became useless. In early 1865, only Wilmington remained open, the mouth of its harbor protected by Fort Fisher.

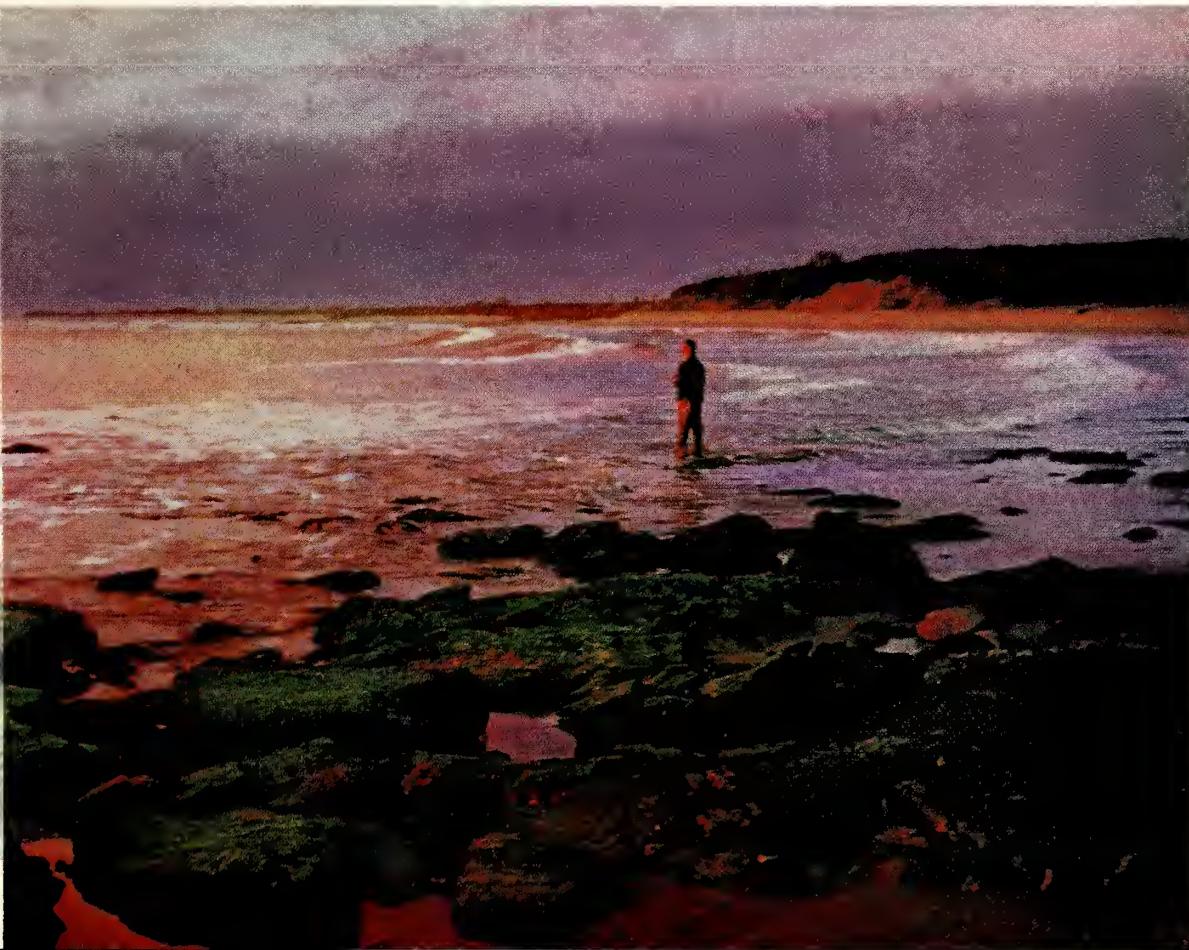
Lee decided that if Fort Fisher fell, he would have to evacuate Richmond. In January, 1865, a Navy-Army force bombarded and then captured it.

Vizetelly arrived in time for the final battle (left). Shells tore at the fort, and he saw three men (foreground) killed by flying fragments. Another shot scattered a reserve stack of ammunition, and stretcher-bearers threaded their way among artillerymen serving heavy siege guns.

Wilmington sealed, the Confederacy could no longer import critical supplies—medicines, rifles, raw materials—that somehow kept its shaky war economy in operation. Another nail had been driven into its coffin.

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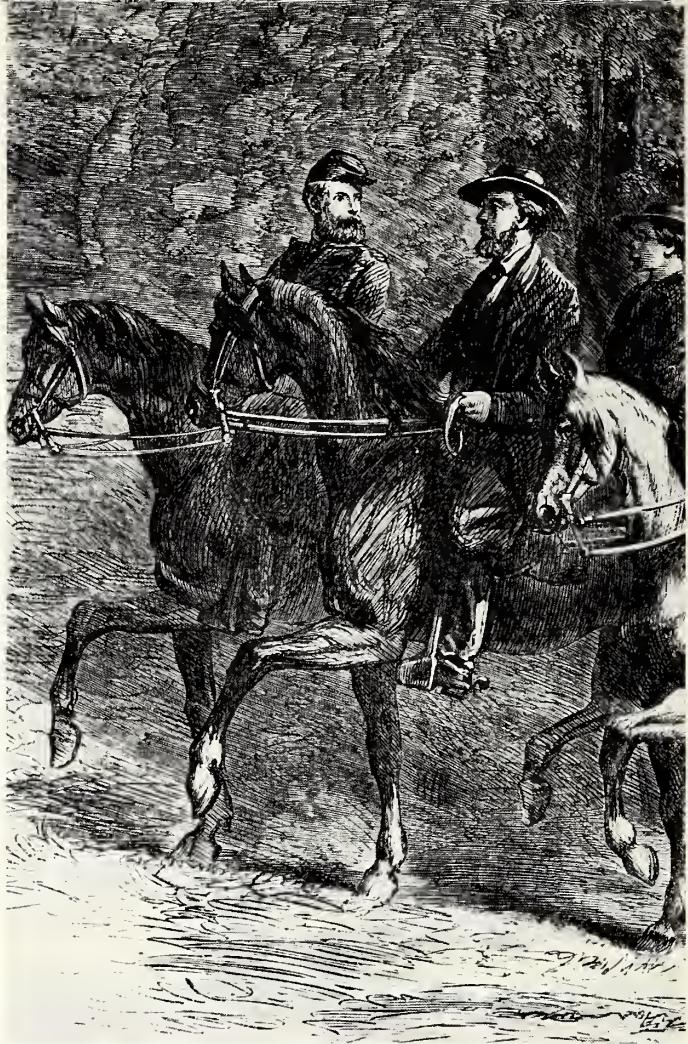
## Vizetelly witnesses the drama's last act

**N**OW IT WAS OVER: Richmond fell, and Lee surrendered at Appomattox Court House. Vizetelly, cut off from England and surrounded by the ruins of the Confederacy, faded into the hectic anarchy that swirled through the ravaged South.

He made his way from Virginia to Gen. Joseph Johnston's army in North Carolina, one of the last major Confederate forces left in the field. There, with a veteran correspondent's sure instinct, he picked up the trail of President Jefferson Davis, who had fled south from Richmond with remnants of his government.

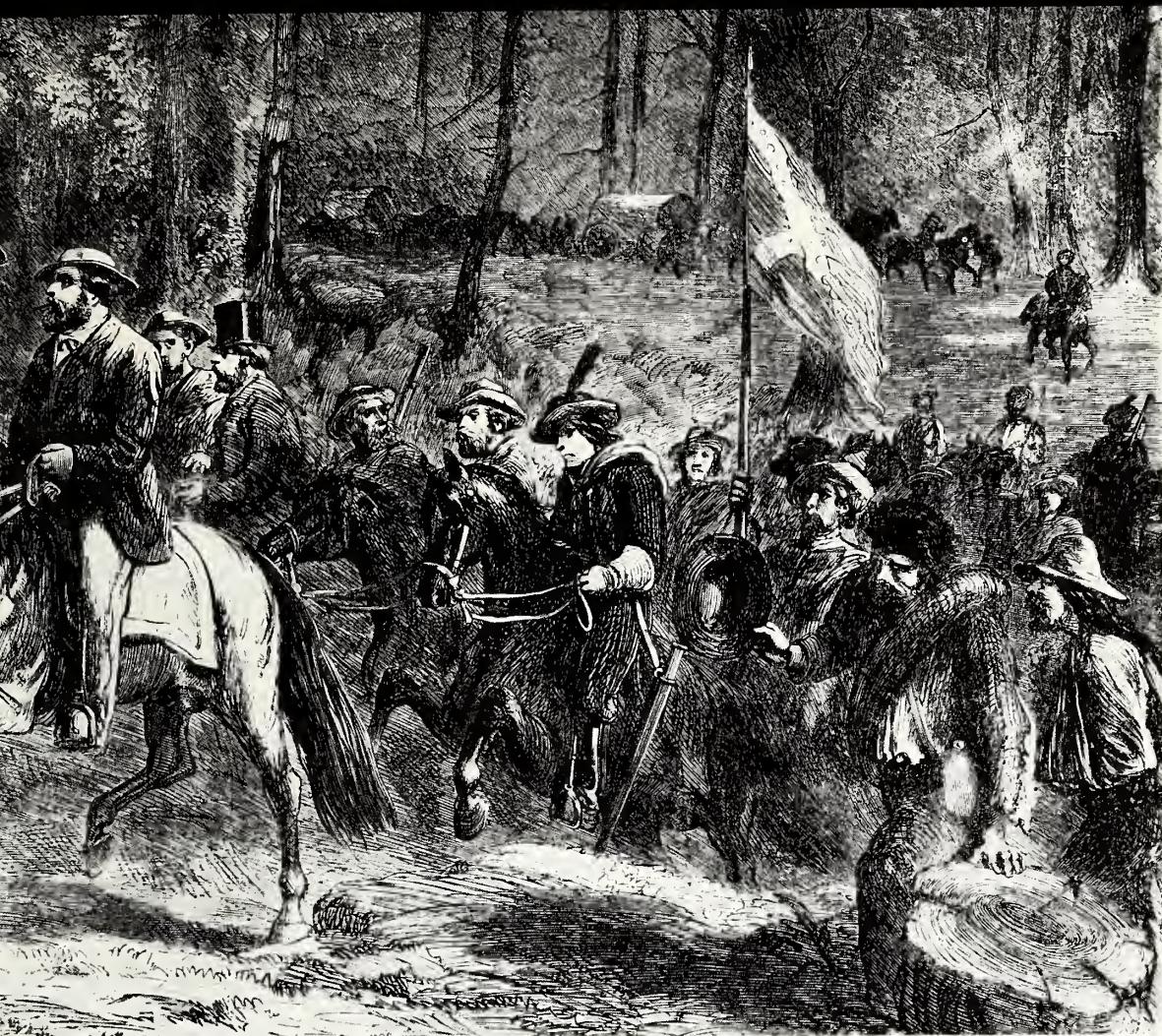
The only reporter with the party, Vizetelly recorded the hopeless, sad last days of the Confederacy. One sketch (right) showed Davis flanked by Gen. Braxton Bragg (in cap) and Secretary of State Judah P. Benja-

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KODACHROME BY NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PHOTOGRAPHER THOMAS NEBBIA © N.G.S.





min, plodding through Georgia woods.

Davis's futile flight ended five days after the drawing was made, when a Federal cavalry force caught up with him. Vizetelly had left 48 hours earlier to pick his way to a port — it could have been Charleston, Wilmington, or Savannah — and sail for England. Before he left, the story goes, he put 50 pounds in good English gold into a fund to help the former President.

**A**N OLD CAMPAIGNER at 34, Vizetelly left America to seek new wars and adventures. He never lost relish for his dangerous, knockabout trade. In 1883 an Egyptian force marched out to pacify the rebellious Sudan, and Vizetelly — of course — was in the thick of the fighting. Mahdist tribesmen surprised and annihilated the army, and there, among the 10,000 men he campaigned with, sketched, and wrote about, he vanished — presumably killed — at the age of 53.

The headlong rush of great battles and

events were his life. But along the way, he gave his British readers a better understanding of the real United States — until then a storybook land of red Indians, rowdy frontiersmen, and drawing-room buffoons. His facile pen put before them a new Nation, young perhaps and yet unformed, but nevertheless one to reckon with.

The guns of the campaigns of the Civil War are long since silent, and few people remember Vizetelly's name. Like many a great reporter before and since, he buried himself in his stories and was lost in them.

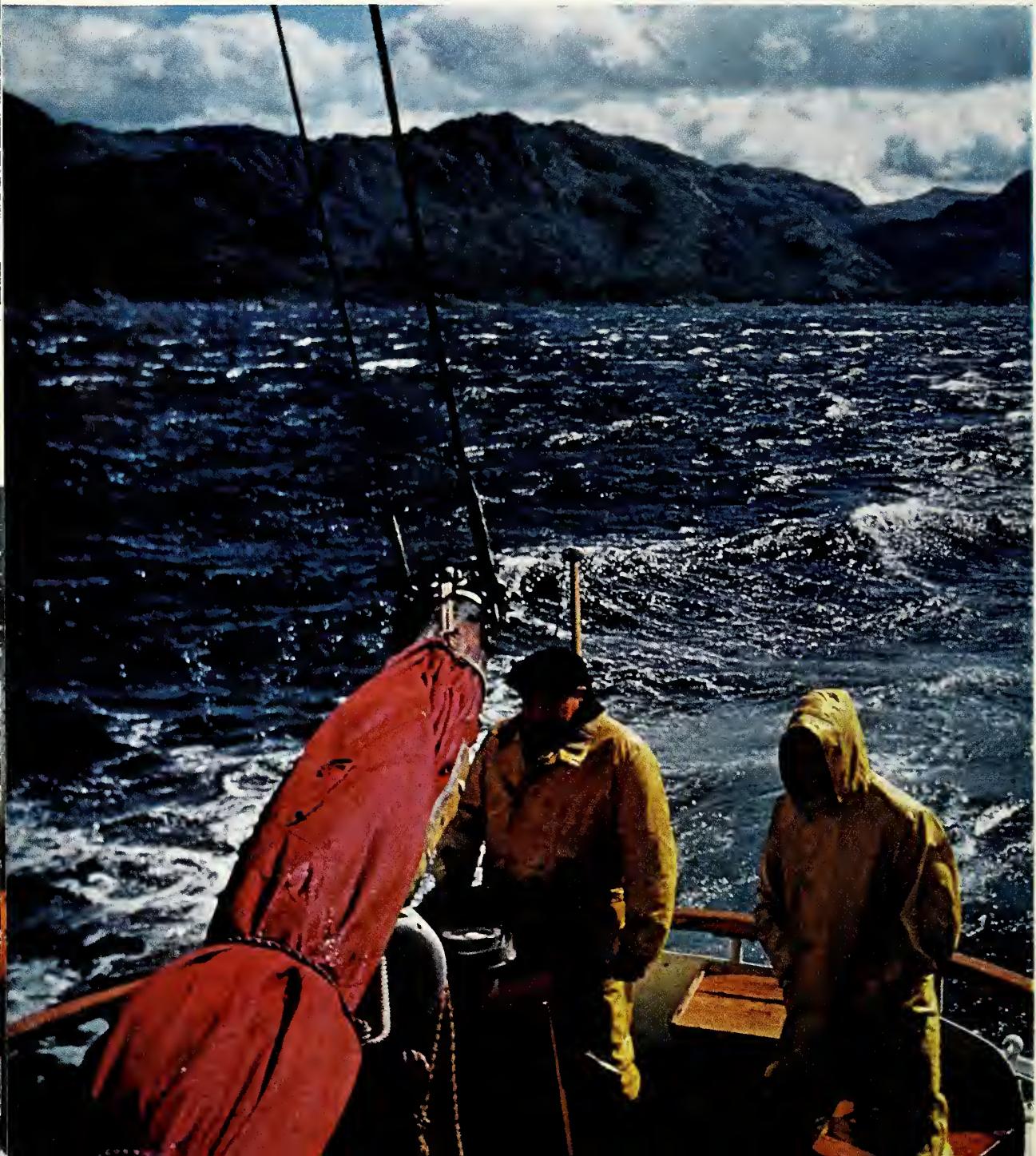
But perhaps somewhere in a pine wood, a campfire flickers in the soft twilight, and Jeb Stuart leans back and takes his ease among his friends. Someone beckons, a banjo sounds a chord, and "The Perfect Cure" carols across the countryside. Vizetelly is there, red beard flying and feet pumping as he beats out the time. He throws his head back and his voice booms out, merry and irrepressible, leading the chorus.

# SCOTLAND from her lovely LOCHS and SEAS

By ALAN VILLIERS

*Illustrations by National Geographic photographer ROBERT F. SISSON*

Bucking wind and whitecap, the





National Geographic Article

v119 #4 April 1961

Frank V. Leach

1900-1920

1920-1940

